02347

1968/11/20

[November 20, 1968]

CMC Wed am 20 Nov 68

--questions Pursley sharply on why no messages from State?
Why don't they tell us what goes on!

report from Frank Lincoln (yesterday: private talk with CMC)
--Nixon wants to know Shld there be a Pentagon counterpart to Bob Murphy?
CMC answer-- No!
All our traffic goes to State--Murphy will see it there

(Nitze objects strenuously we do need a Nixon man here for budget)

CMC repeated again his urging that there be a Secretary-designate as soon as possible

Lincoln thinks Nixon might want to see CMC in a week or so--

Lincoln asked CMC re his staying on. CMC says he has 5 or 6 points why he shldn't stay

Lincoln & CMC had talked/agreed earlier re Nixon & CMC shld talk face to face. CMC urged this because he wants Nixon to hear face to face his V.Nam. views

CMC thinks it wld be unwise The new administration needs a "whole new cut"

CMC prefers & recommends a small informal group of advisors; he'd be glad to serve in that group.

Last night:

6:45--LBJ/CMC/Dean Rusk (just off helicopter from Andrews & his Europe trip

LBJ (CMC gratified to find) followed line for line the script CMC had hit him with at luncheon day before

LBJ says we must have action--
Dean Rusk bowed out, saying he just didn't have any current info.

Rostow, then, pulled out a proposed cable to Bunker that CMC

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& Katzenbach had drafted over phone Tues. p.m.

This was a personal info./Guidance to Bunker That we were coming to end of road--if Saigon doesn't agree, U.S. start talks with Hanoi in Paris by Nov. 29/30.

Pres. wants to settle action at "Tuesday" luncheon wch will be held today--Wednesday (postponed 24 hrs because of Rusk's delayed return from Europe.

Discussion re new pressures on Thieu
--amounts we have budgeted for help to S.V.Nam
--What are the amounts & how can we cut?

Nitze says we must remember we still have an enemy--as well as a recalcitrant ally. Let's not forget the enemy!

Nitze ends by saying--Let's rock along to 20 Jan but not force SVNam to come to Paris & not talk without them

Warnke disagrees--it's neither essential nor desireable to have SVNam present--the talks will turn into a shambles with SVNam present--They'll fuck it up & we'll be involved in a far worse mess

GME views

1) I don't believe there is such a thing as maintaining[?] status quo it will fall apart, military will blow up & demand resumption of bombing
2) I side with Paul Warnke we can do better in Paris now without them
3) Therefore I hope Pres. will decide today to establish next Wed. as date for 1st meeting & set machinery in motion Now--not just a debating society
This would include informing Pres-elect Nixon/Robt. Murphy

long discussion--all types of alternatives considered of how to get S.V.Nam coming in--

CMC breaks in Thieu just [doesn't?] want the talks to get anyplace! He just wants us to spend $30 billion a year & 15,000 men a year & grind down the N.V.Namese

Thieu is counting on Nixon--he feels (I think erroneously) to be "hard." He doesn't want any action between now & Jan 20th except continued pressure by Abrams

CMC convinced Saigon wld like to have the present situation

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collapse so that we have to go back to bombing & a full[-]scale renewal of the war!

among other items considered: a full-scale council of strategy: Harriman, Bunker, et al. here in D.C. so we have a concerted strategy.

by 10:45

CMC esp. impressed by GME arguments (frequently & vehemently expressed) that there must be a firm timetable agreement today at luncheon.

CMC is handed a batch of cables--Bunker wants another week!!!

discussion on until 11:00 on V.Nam.

GME among many other items--an interpretation of Ellsworth Bunker. He'll never get tough--& he'll probably never get a tough message over to Thieu. He's incapable of doing it

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